

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 20, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We appreciate the steps you took to declare a nationwide emergency pursuant to Sec. 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”). We also appreciate the approval of major disaster declaration requests pursuant to the emergency declaration by 50 U.S. states, tribes, and territories. We agree that the severity and magnitude of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has the potential to cause severe consequences for our country’s national and economic security. Given the unprecedented nature of this pandemic, we urge you to eliminate the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) non-Federal cost share currently required under these declarations to help state, local, tribal and territorial governments fight this global pandemic.

Since your initial nationwide emergency declaration, the number of positive cases has grown rapidly. Our nation now leads the world in confirmed COVID-19 cases. We worry the worst has yet to come. It is vital the federal government leverage the full weight of its resources to allow state, local, tribal and territorial governments to dedicate their limited resources to outbreak response efforts in their fight against the spread of COVID-19. Increasing the federal cost share of FEMA public assistance provides much-needed relief in additional federal assistance for state, local, tribal and territorial governments. Our request empowers those entities to focus their limited resources on containing and mitigating the virus.

Raising the federal cost share is not unprecedented and within your authority under Sec. 501(b) of the Stafford Act, which states “... the primary responsibility for response rests with the United States because... the United States exercises exclusive or preeminent responsibility and authority.” This authority has been invoked in times of past national crises. The federal portion of FEMA public assistance cost share has also been adjusted during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the devastating flooding in Louisiana in 2016, and the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in 2017. As our entire country faces the daunting challenge of defeating this global pandemic, the full capacity of the federal government needs to be used so those on the front lines can focus on saving lives and protect our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you very much for your attention to our request to help our state, local, tribal and territorial governments. It is an important and urgently needed step that will help our nation combat this global pandemic.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



John Rutherford  
Member of Congress

**Additional Signatories Include:**

Representative Peter A. DeFazio  
Representative Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Representative Colin Allred  
Representative Joyce Beatty  
Representative Ami Bera, M.D.  
Representative Earl Blumenauer  
Representative Anthony Brindisi  
Representative Anthony G. Brown  
Representative Julia Brownley  
Representative Cheri Bustos  
Representative G. K. Butterfield  
Representative Salud Carbajal  
Representative Tony Cárdenas  
Representative André Carson  
Representative Ed Case  
Representative Sean Casten  
Representative Kathy Castor  
Representative Judy Chu  
Representative David Cicilline  
Representative Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
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Representative Danny K. Davis  
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